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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HANOI 000448

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE PASS USDOL ILAB
STATE ALSO PASS USAID FOR ANTOINETTE FERRARA
STATE ALSO PASS USTR FOR EBRYAN
PHNOM PENH FOR USAID

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ELAB](#) [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [VM](#) [HUMANR](#) [LABOR](#)

SUBJECT: VIETNAM: LAUNCH OF CHILD LABOR COOPERATION PROJECT

REF: 02 HANOI 2914

[11.](#) (U) SUMMARY: On February 18, the sixth and final U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) funded project, the National Program for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labor, officially commenced. This project focuses on the prevention and elimination of child labor by strengthening the capacity of government, mass organizations and civil society to address the problems of the worst forms of child labor through the prevention, protection and removal from dangerous work of children who are at the greatest risk. As Vietnam's economy transforms, there has been both a dramatic fall in the numbers of children participating in economic activities and the growth of new forms of vulnerabilities. Prior to this project Vietnam had already begun to address the issue through such actions as the ratification of ILO Convention 182. However, this program presents an opportunity to bring together the various stakeholders in a more cohesive and comprehensive approach. END SUMMARY.

[12.](#) (U) Continuing implementation of the 2000 U.S.-Vietnam Memorandum of Understanding on Labor (MOU) and its accompanying technical assistance programs (see reftel), the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) funded National Program for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labor was officially launched on February 18. This 30-month, \$500,000 program focuses on the prevention and elimination of child labor by strengthening the capacity of government, mass organizations and civil society to address the problems of the worst forms of child labor through the prevention, protection and removal from dangerous work of children who are at the greatest risk. It is being executed by the International Labor Organization (ILO) Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) in collaboration with Vietnam's Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), the Ministry of Education and Training, provincial governments, Vietnam General Confederation of Labor (VGCL), the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), and the Vietnam Cooperative Alliance (VCA). These bodies will cooperate to carry out research, raise awareness, review national laws, and promote the creation of community-based monitoring of child labor. In addition to working to progressively eliminate child labor in selected hazardous sectors by removing a total of approximately 1500 children from work, the program will provide these children with social protection services. Furthermore, recognizing that the issue of the child labor cannot be resolved without creating alternative sources of income, the program will enable family members of former working children to access income generation and training activities.

[13.](#) (U) At the official launch ceremony, speakers from MOLISA, the ILO, the provinces and Embassy highlighted Vietnam's continuing efforts in this area, including the ratification of ILO Convention 182 on the Prohibition and Immediate Action on the Worst Forms of Child Labor and the creation of a Draft National Plan of Action on Child Labor. They pointed out that as Vietnam's economy transforms, there has been, in general terms, a dramatic fall in the numbers of children participating in economic activities. However, reports indicate a rise in internal migration and the numbers of displaced and unregistered families and children found in urban centers. Children and young people can now be found in informal work arrangements that are unsupervised and unregulated. U.S. DCM emphasized that we are especially concerned about children, who work long hours, sometimes away from home, under exploitative, socially unjust or hazardous conditions, with little or no pay, and who are deprived of their right to health, education and future development.

[14.](#) (SBU) COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATION: The GVN, having approved the project in March 2002, has been anxiously awaiting its launch while the ILO worked through its own internal process. A number of issues still need to be addressed between USDOL and the National Project Manager. Post therefore, recommends that the USDOL International Program Analyst come to Vietnam as soon as possible for in-country consultations.

[15.](#) (SBU) COMMENT CONT'D: With this program underway, all six projects outlined in the bilateral MOU have begun. As

we approach this year's bilateral labor dialogue, the future of this excellent cooperation program should be discussed. While the approval process was neither quick nor easy, the GVN is enthusiastically implementing all six projects with excellent results. The MOU has provided an important tool to advancing labor issues in Vietnam. Post recommends consideration of additional programs that could fall under the MOU.

BURGHARDT